

*The estate of  
Elizabeth Gathory,  
outside of Paris  
Present...*



*...during a party for  
which she is not in  
the mood.*





I HAD  
HIM,  
BATHORY.

I  
NEEDED  
HIM.



I'M HAVING  
A PARTY,  
VICTOR.  
MUST WE  
TALK BUSI-  
NESS?

WE  
HAD  
A  
DEAL!





YOU  
-DEVI-  
OUS  
SNAKE  
!

I  
SHOULD  
HAVE  
NEVER  
HAD FAITH  
IN YOUR  
WITCH-  
CRAFT!









# A MIDNIGHT OPERA

ACT III

CREATED BY  
HANS "HANZO" STEINBACH



HAMBURG // LONDON // LOS ANGELES // TOKYO

***A Midnight Opera Act III***  
**created by Hans "Hanzo" Steinbach**

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# Story Thus Far...

## Scenario Acts I and II

### 1500s-1700s

---

*Einblück and Lereux (DeLaLune, two undead brothers, achieved what most of their kind would have thought impossible; they integrated the undead population seamlessly and secretly into human society. In their long, hard struggle, they allied themselves with the Colonists of Western Europe and stood against the tyranny of the Catholic authority, specifically The Order under the leadership of Cardinal LaCerna, a secret group of holy warriors whose sole mission was to hunt down the undead and exterminate them.*

### 1610-1850

---

*The witch Elizabeth Gathory was targeted by The Order, her family killed and her life ruined, until she joined with Einblück and Lereux. However, her thirst for the blood of young virgins came into direct conflict with the undead community the brothers (DeLaLune) hoped to create. Lereux himself took particular interest in the salvation of Elizabeth, and for that she grew to love him. However, Lereux never learned how to return it.*

### 1850

---

*As centuries passed and complacency set in, Einblück chose to retire his leadership of the undead and pursue a career in music. His exceptional talent found him highly regarded in the most elite circles of Paris, where he met and fell in love with Christine Beaumont, a celebrated soprano virtuoso. A new life opened up for Einblück. Feeling abandoned, Lereux worked to protect his brother from the dangers that love poses to the undead, much less love for a human woman. For this he turned to Elizabeth Gathory, whose cure for Einblück's affliction was the death of Christine. Einblück, heartbroken, watched, leaving only a grief-stricken Lereux and an increasingly devilish Elizabeth to lead the undead.*

### A hundred fifty years later

---

*Einblück re-emerges as an underground goth metal sensation. He has fallen in love with yet another human woman, Dahlia Whyte, with whom he would have run away from Europe forever if it were not for the confluence of his past's myriad strains on his immediate present. The Order has regrouped and resumed its crusade against the undead. The peace Ein fought so hard to establish has frayed. Once again, his brother looks to him to save it all: a brother who Einblück now knows had something to do with the horrible death of his once-beloved Christine.*

### Now

---

*Lereux and Einblück return to Paris from Prague, where they would have fallen to the multitudes of Elizabeth's undead herds if it weren't for the witch's monumental change of heart after a conversation with one Dahlia Whyte in a Parisian bar. This change of heart infuriated Victor Frankenstein who had teamed up with Elizabeth to capture the brothers (DeLaLune). And Cardinal Clement LaCerna, aware now that both the brothers (DeLaLune) and Elizabeth Gathory are once again together and in Paris, organizes a final assault on the undead, turning to a spectre from his past for help.*

## FOREWORD

Hans Steinbach is about to start drawing my manga series *Poison Candy* for TOKYOPOP. So I have taken a great interest in *A Midnight Opera*. I wanted to be sure that this is the right guy to be interpreting my script. Now that the series is done, I'm reassured.

Hanzo couldn't have a more different background from my own. Until I was nineteen, I had barely set foot outside the county where I was born. I was twenty-five the first time I flew in a plane. Hanzo grew up travelling constantly, soaking up the cultures of a dozen different countries, the religions, the languages, the art and the music. His world spanned continents. I rarely met anyone who didn't have the same accent as me. But when I read *A Midnight Opera*, I recognise Hanzo's hero, Einblick DeLaLune is my fantasy alter ego. This is a character who speaks to every self-obsessed introverted fantasist who ever dreamed of getting up on a stage and blowing an audience away with ear-splitting guitar licks. Ein has it all— the moody, pale degenerate beauty, the doomed love affairs, the dark longings and virtuoso skills with guitar and handguns. *A Midnight Opera* stirs a lot of memories of the stuff I was into as a teen-ager: horror movies like *Nostradamus* and *Night of the Living Dead*, The Gothic fantasy *Gormenghast* and the poisonous *Maldoror* by the Comte de Lautremont, Alice Cooper's classic album *Killer*, Underground comics and the degenerate art of David Edward Britton. Still, when I tried to put my finger on why this character is the perfect synthesis of everything that made my teen years bearable, I couldn't quite figure it out.

Einblick DeLaLune is a beautiful loser in the style of Arthur Rimbaud and Jim Morrison. His lover is called Dahlia Whyte – an inversion of the Black Dahlia – the most famous, haunting victim of psychopathic murder of the 20th Century. It is the inversions and contradictions that make Ein so fascinating. He is a Pacifist and a Zombie Killer. He is Degenerate, Christian, Undead. When shadows fall across his face, his eye is transformed into the white orb of the full moon. All this is good. But there's one more element that made the connection, that reached out across the years. I spotted it in my third reading. It's the cigarettes, dummy! Einblick DeLaLune is a Smoker. In this brave new 21st Century world I had almost forgotten why smoking is cool. It's right there on the pack in black and white. "Smoking is bad for you." It gives you cancer and messes your heart and lungs and ultimately it will kill you. Every drag you take brings you a step closer to a miserable death. That's why smoking is cool. And Einblick smokes so very well, he uses a Zippo lighter. The cigarette hangs from his lips at precisely the right angle. He exhales through the nose. He flicks his cigarette butt in a perfect arc across the face of the moon.

There are all kinds of reasons for digging this series: the languorous beauty of the art, the expert pacing and page design, the delicate line work, the narcotic sexuality and poetic blood-spilling, but in the end it's the ciggies that did it for me. This book should carry a government health warning: *A MIDNIGHT OPERA IS BAD FOR YOU*.

--David Hine (*Strange Embrace, Spoken, District X*)

*Vatican City,  
Rome  
Present*



*Dominus tecum  
Benedicta tu in mulieribus  
Et benedictus  
Et benedictus  
fructus ventris  
Vestris tuus, Jesus.  
Ave Maria*





Am Mord  
Mord der  
Ordnung  
paratibus  
Ordnung

AD XINER VII PONT. PALAT





*Orate pro rebus peccatoribus  
Nunc et in hora mortis*



*Et in hora mortis nostrae  
Et in hora mortis nostrae*



*Et in  
hora  
mortis  
nostrae...*



...Ave Maria



LA-  
GRODOR!



CARDINAL  
LAGRODOR

YES, OF  
COURSE  
YOUR  
GRACE  
IT IS  
SURPRIS-  
ING...

...THAT  
YOU'VE  
COME TO  
PAY US A  
VISIT



TAKE ME TO  
CELL XXVII.



TIME  
IS OF  
THE ES-  
SENCE,  
PREAR.



I  
WOULD  
NEED  
PAPAL  
AUTHOR-  
IZATION...

SOME-  
THING  
FROM  
PADRE  
LORENZO...



I hereby grant Cardinal LaCroix  
unrestricted access to the Vatican's  
prison as well as unlimited use of  
Vatican resources for his pursuit of  
dark agents in Europe.

Pope Pius XII



NOW.

Quand il seut  
Qu'on estoit en son absence  
Et son absence  
Il seut la cause de sa mort  
Dont il fut si content  
Qu'il seut la cause de sa mort



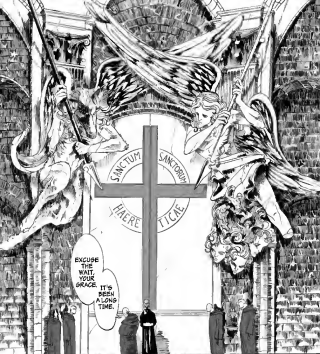
*Ave Maria  
Mater Dei*



*Ora pro nobis peccatoribus  
Ora pro nobis...*















WELL, IF  
IT ISN'T  
THE GRAND  
INGRESS-  
ITOR.



HOW'VE  
YOU  
BEEN!



THEY MUST BE  
EXTRAORDINARILY  
DIRE IF YOU'VE  
COME CALLING  
ON ME.

DOES  
GOD  
SEEK  
THE  
DEVIL  
FOR  
HELP?

*Paris  
Present  
A Gloomy Day*







THINGS  
ARE GET-  
TING  
STORMY.



PERHAPS  
ELIZABETH  
WILL HELP.



I MEAN,  
I'M GOING  
TO LEAVE.



MY  
BROTHER  
IS GETTING  
OUT HERE.



SCREEEE

















HOW  
ABOUT  
WE LEAVE  
NOW?

THAT'S  
CUTE, HOW  
YOU DO THAT  
WITHOUT  
EVEN  
THINKING.



DON'T  
PROMISE  
THINGS  
YOU CAN'T.

THEN  
GIVE ME  
SOME  
TIME.

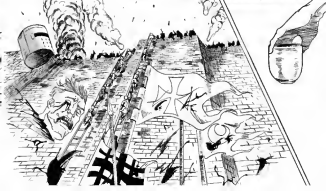
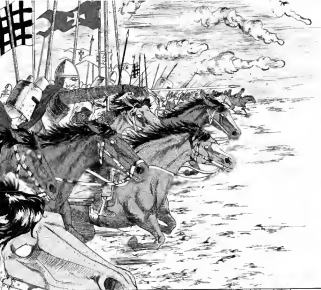


I  
LOVE  
YOU.

NOW,  
THAT I  
BELIEVE.

COME ON.  
I'LL SEW  
THAT UP  
AND MAKE  
US A...





Jerusalem,  
1099

...DRINK





IT'S OKAY,  
CLEMENT.  
I KNOW  
WHY  
YOU ARE  
HERE.

DRINK  
ANY-  
WAY...  
TO DAYS  
THAT  
WILL BE  
NO MORE.



TO MY  
FRIEND,  
REIN-  
HARDT!









BUT  
THE  
CHURCH  
HAD  
OTHER  
PLANS.



IT IS  
MY  
HOLY  
DUTY.



OH,  
CLEMENT...



YOU  
LOOK PALE,  
YOU LOOK  
TIRED.







I WAS  
GOING  
TO DO IT  
FOR YOU,  
GUM-  
ENT.

SO  
THAT WE  
COULD BE  
LINKED...  
THROUGH  
LIFE AND  
BEYOND.



BUT  
YOU  
FOUND  
AN-  
OTHER  
BEAST  
TO DO  
IT...



...SO  
YOU  
COULD  
KILL  
ME.



IT  
IS MY  
HOLY  
DUTY.



clhhe



I CAN ONLY  
IMAGINE  
HOW THE  
CHURCH  
JUSTIFIED  
IT TO YOU.



PERHAPS  
THEY  
CONVINCED  
YOU THAT  
WE WERE  
BARBARIC.

BRUTAL,  
BLOOD-  
THIRSTY  
CREA-  
TURES.



BUT  
WE ARE  
BRAVE  
PEOPLE...  
FAMILIES,  
CHILDREN,  
MERCHANTS,  
FARMERS...

...PIGUS  
MEN.

BUT WE  
DO LIVE  
FOR-  
EVER...

...AND  
FOR  
THAT  
YOU  
WILL  
HUNT  
ALL  
OF US  
DOWN...



NOT  
BECAUSE IT  
IS RIGHT...  
NOT EVEN  
BECAUSE YOU  
WANT TO...











WE ARE  
LINKED.  
THE  
SAME MIND  
AND SOUL  
IF NOT  
THE SAME  
FLESH.



YOU'VE  
MADE A  
MESS.

HAVE  
IT



WELL,  
I'M SURE  
COUNTLESS  
MENDEL-  
CANTS  
ARE ON  
HAND...

TO  
SCUB  
OUT THE  
PULPY  
DETROITUS  
FROM THE  
BOWELS  
OF THE  
VATICAN.

DON'T  
BE SO  
FLIPPANT  
ABOUT  
HUMAN  
LIFE.

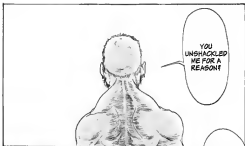




I'M BEING  
FLIPPANT  
ABOUT  
YOUR  
AFFINITY  
FOR IT!







YOU  
UNSHACKLED  
ME FOR A  
REASON



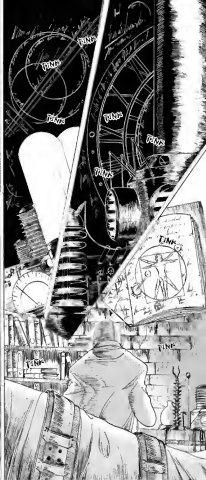
WE WILL  
DESTROY  
EDMUND  
AND LEROUX  
DELAUNE...

...THE  
LAST OF  
THOSE IN  
THE LINE OF  
REINHARDT  
DELAUNE.

OH, IS  
THAT  
ALL?



*Austria, Present  
A foreboding castle in  
the wilderness...*





MALLEYS  
MALEFICARVM



LIKE A  
PHOENIX  
THAT RISES  
FROM THE  
ASHES OF  
DEATH...

...YOU SHALL  
COME  
ALIVE—  
ONCE  
AGAIN!



**R  
I  
S  
E  
!**



**Rise!**

**AH**

**HA HA**

**HA HA!**





*The estate of  
Elizabeth Bathory  
outside of Paris,  
Present*





*Somewhere in the  
abandoned antiquity  
of Paris, Present*



*In the skies  
over the Vatican,  
Present*





...AND OF  
THE SON...

I  
BAPTIZE  
THIS  
CHILD  
IN THE  
NAME  
OF THE  
FATHER  
...



France, 1559

...AND  
OF THE  
HOLY  
GHOST.

FLYING  
HORSE!  
NICO-  
BOONE!









AS THE  
ELDER,  
YOU  
HAVE A  
RESPON-  
SIBILITY  
FOR HIM.



THERE  
MAY  
COME  
A TIME  
WHEN...



...WHEN...



WHEN  
WHAT,  
PAPA?



GABRIELLA,  
TAKE THE  
CHILDREN  
TO THEIR  
ROOM



SHINE

HIDE  
IN THE  
BEDROOM  
NOW,  
CASSAN-  
DRA!













IN  
HOMINE  
PACTIS...

THE  
MON-  
STER!

...ET  
SPIRITUS  
SANCTI...

...ET  
FILLI...

CLEMENT,  
YOU HAVE  
TURNED  
INTO...









GRAAGGHHHHH!!!





A black and white comic book illustration depicting a dramatic scene where soldiers are restraining a massive, roaring creature. The creature's mouth is wide open, revealing sharp teeth and a dark interior. Several soldiers, wearing helmets and armor, are positioned around the creature, using chains and wooden beams to hold it down. One soldier in the foreground is pulling a chain attached to the creature's lower jaw. The background shows a dark, rocky landscape. The overall style is reminiscent of classic comic book art, with bold lines and dynamic shading.

PULL  
THE  
CHAINS  
TIGHTER!

HOLD  
HIS  
BODY  
DOWN!



GRAAA

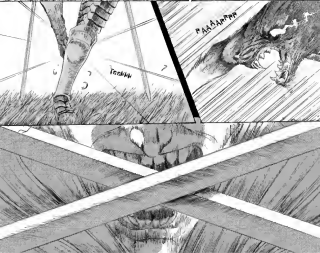
FWWWP

SHWWW











SSSSPLURGH!





Cough...  
cck...

Clement...  
not her...  
no...

REIN-  
HARDT!

cough...



YOU  
DEVILS!



PLING

OH NO  
YOU DON'T,  
MA CHER-  
RIE



NO...  
PLEASE  
...



LET'S SEE  
WHAT'CHA  
HIDIN'  
THERE!

High  
High  
High



WHAT  
FOUL  
DEVIL  
POS-  
SESSES  
YOU!

Clement  
...

You've  
disobeyed  
the church  
for years...  
allowed me  
to have a  
family...

I AM  
HERE...

Danke  
...





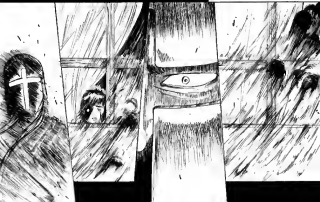
NON...  
MON  
PIEU...  
NON...



ENDLESS  
LOOK...



FORGIVE  
ME...





*Paris, Present*

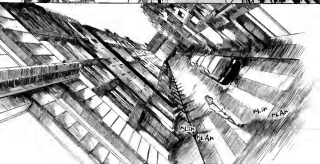


WELCOME  
BACK,  
CARDINAL.

WE HAVE  
LOCATED  
ALL  
TARGETS  
AND  
AWAIT  
YOUR  
ORDER.

VERY  
GOOD

ATTACK.









# AHHHHH!



CHRIS-  
TINE!

CHRISTINE!

No,  
MY  
LOVE!  
MY  
LOVE!





*You are so beautiful...*



*For you, Dahlia...*



*...I'll  
quit.*



*Time to Rock.*







SKREEEEEEEE









YOU'RE  
NOT  
COLD UP  
HERE.  
ARE  
YOU?

I  
WOULDN'T  
WANT YOU  
TO BE  
COLD.



THE CITY DOES  
LOOK BEAUTIFUL FROM  
THIS VANTAGE.

ONCE SO  
QUIET,  
AND NOW  
HARDLY  
ABLE TO  
SHUT  
UP.



I'VE  
HAD  
TIME...  
AWAY  
FROM  
YOU...

AND...  
UM...  
HAVE  
CONSID-  
ERED.



WELL,  
DON'T  
GLAM  
UP NOW,  
DARLING.



AH,  
YOUR  
POETRY  
IS JUST  
MELTING  
ME,  
SWEETIE.



I HAVE  
LIVED  
BY  
DISCI-  
PLINE...

...AND RE-  
STRAINED  
MY  
HEART...

BUT NO  
LONGER...  
BABY.





Vatican City,  
1560



IT IS  
NOT  
EASY  
TO  
FORGET  
THE  
PAIN  
OF  
THIS  
WORLD



THE  
ORDER  
HAS  
BEEN  
THE  
ONLY  
EFFECTIVE  
TOOL  
WE  
HAVE  
AGAINST  
THEM.



YOU  
MUST  
CARRY  
ON  
YOUR  
BLESSED  
ROLE...



AND  
EXUNGE  
FROM  
THIS  
WORLD  
THE  
KIN  
AND  
KIND  
OF  
DELAUNE



YOU SEEM  
TO ME  
DISTRESSED  
BY THIS  
CHARGE

PERHAPS  
YOU FEEL  
UNRE-  
WARDED



CLEMENT  
LACROIX,  
FOR YOUR  
SERVICES  
TO THE  
PAPACY...



...I  
HEREBY  
NAME YOU  
CARDINAL...



...Cardinal LaCroix...

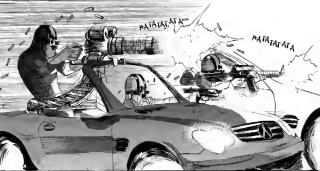


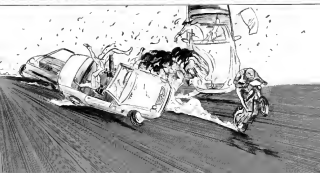
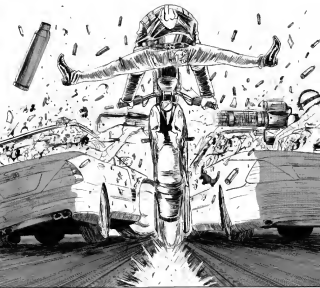














YOU  
SEE A  
MONSTER  
IN ME...



AND I  
SEE A  
MONSTER  
IN YOU!



FREE  
THE  
KILLING  
BEAST  
WITHIN

THE  
FINAL  
SHOW IS  
ABOUT  
TO  
BEGIN





THROUGH  
THE  
SLAYING...

...of  
MY KIM!





GUTEN  
ABEND,  
ESNBLICK  
BABY.



YOU LOOK  
SO GOD-  
DAMN SEXY  
IN THOSE  
PANTS,  
SCHNEID!

THOSE  
THINGS  
ARE TIGHT-  
ER THAN  
THE FATAL  
ASSHOLE.

LET ME  
GET A  
CLOSER  
LOOK.



OH, I'VE  
MISSED  
YOU SO  
GODDAMN  
MUCH!















WE'RE  
OFF  
BALANCE!  
I CAN'T  
HOLD IT  
LEVEL!

WE'RE GOING  
DOWN! I REPEAT!  
WE'RE GOING  
DOWN!



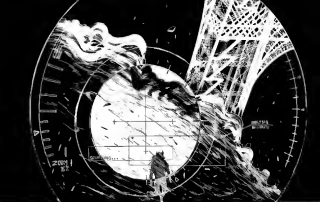


WE'VE  
LOST A  
BIRD...

...BUT  
TARGET  
TWO IS  
DEAD.

SCANNING  
NOW--





MERDEI

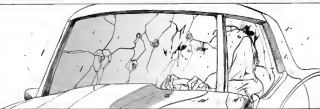


WAIT!  
WAIT!  
I'M YOUR  
BIGGEST  
FAN!



RAT  
TAT  
TAT  
TAT  
TAT





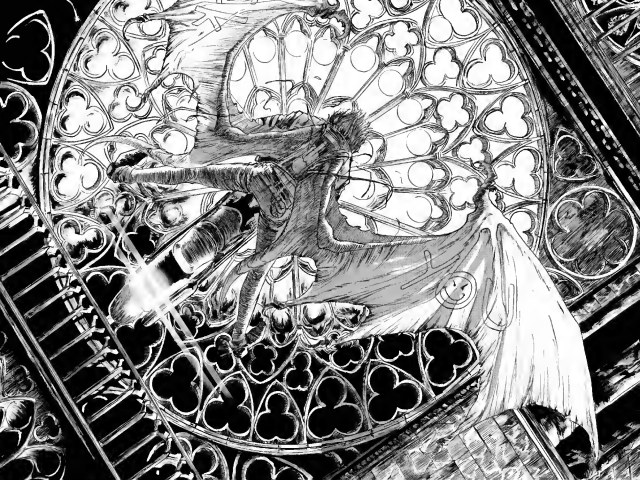








THE  
ROSE  
WINDOW?!  
DON'T  
YOU  
DARE!













WOULD  
YOU BELIEVE  
ME IF I SAID  
THAT THIS...

...IS THE  
MOST ROM-  
ANTIC  
THING  
ANYONE HAS  
EVER DONE  
FOR ME!



LE-  
ROUX!



WOULD YOU  
BELIEVE  
ME IF I  
TOLD YOU  
THAT I'VE  
ALWAYS...

...  
WANTED  
TO KILL  
YOU!



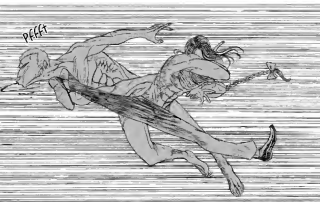
MMM  
MMGH!



THIS  
ONE  
LOOKS  
GOOD.

LET'S  
HAVE  
US A  
TASTE.

MY  
HANDS  
MY  
HANDS.









SMNNAAAASH



PRET-  
TIER!  
AH HA  
HA HA  
HA!









WE HAVE  
BORNE  
SUCH  
UNJUST  
MISERY



I ADMIRE  
YOU FOR  
ATTEMPTING  
DIS-  
IMAGY.



BUT  
THE  
TRUTH  
IS..

...WE CAN  
NEVER LIVE  
TOGETHER  
WITH  
HUMANS.



YOU  
SEE?



NO, I  
DON'T.





EYPT



Cough!  
Graak!  
Cough!

ONE  
BEING  
MUST  
RECEDE  
FOR THE  
OTHER TO  
THRIVE!



TO  
SAVE  
HUMANITY,  
IT IS WE  
WHO MUST  
DIE,  
EINDLICK!





AA-  
HH-  
GGG-  
HH-  
HH!

HA!  
TRY  
TO FLY  
NOW,  
CUTIE!

CCCCC

IT'S NOT  
FAR...

DARLING...  
L...NO...

FIRST  
TEARS I'VE  
EVER SEEN  
YOU SHED...

STAY  
AWAY  
FROM  
HER!



FORGIVE  
ME,  
LELOUX,  
FOR  
WHAT I  
DID...

SHH!  
IT  
DOESN'T  
MATTER.

YOU  
ARE  
KIND.

WHAT A  
WUWU  
SCENE!

WITTLE  
WUW  
BODDS  
IN WUW!

SHH!

SCRAMM!!

IT'S  
DISGUST-  
ING!













You  
are  
just  
like  
him.

Oh,  
Um  
...





THIS  
TOUCHES  
ME  
DEEPLY



I HATE  
BEING  
TOUCHED!

ugh...



OH,  
CLEMENT!  
YOU  
INEPT  
BASTARD!







YEAH,  
IT ALL  
SUCKS,  
LEROUX.



I  
KNOW,  
EIN.



YOU  
BETTER  
MOVE  
ON.

YOU'LL  
BE  
LATE.







*Paris,  
the Rue Morgue  
Present around  
Midnight*





BOUND  
BY HATE,  
GREED AND  
BLASPHEMY  
...



WITH  
BROKEN  
HEARTS  
WE PRAY  
TO  
THEE...



OH  
LORD,  
FORGIVE  
OUR  
SHAME  
...



HALLOWED  
BE THY  
...



N  
A  
M  
E  
!





SACRILEGE OF  
THE MIND AND  
SOUL/ WHO THE  
HELL DO THEY  
THINK THEY ARE?  
TAKING LIVES IN  
THE NAME OF THE  
LORD. WILL THEY  
KILL US ALL?



TRANSCEN-  
DENCE OF  
VIOLENCE  
THE DECAY  
OF DECA-  
DENCE



WHEN  
WILL IT  
END?  
WHEN  
WILL IT  
END?



THROUGH  
PILES OF DEAD  
BODIES, ALL  
I SEE IS  
RELIGIOUS  
TYRANNY!  
THROUGH  
PILES OF DEAD  
BODIES,  
ALL I SEE IS  
RELIGIOUS  
TYRANNY!



RELIGIOUS  
TYRANNY  
!!!





THROUGH  
PILES OF  
DEAD  
BODIES,  
ALL I  
SEE IS  
RELIGIOUS  
TYRANNY  
!!!



GIVE  
THEM  
BACK  
THEIR  
SANITY

...



THEIR  
RIGHT  
TO LIVE,  
THEIR  
DIGNITY

...



RELIGIOUS  
TYRANNY  
!!!











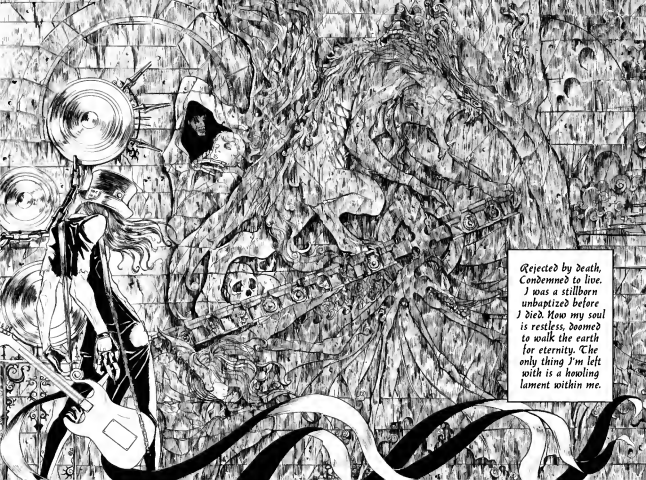


MY  
LOVE!  
MY  
LOVE!



CHRIS-  
TINE!

*To be continued?*



*Rejected by death,  
Condemned to live.  
I was a stillborn  
unbaptized before  
I died. Now my soul  
is restless, doomed  
to walk the earth  
for eternity. The  
only thing I'm left  
with is a howling  
lament within me.*

## The Creator Speaks:

When I first started working on *A Midnight Opera*, a personal goal of mine was to somehow combine Manga with Heavy Metal, and since I was pretty much starting my career as a manga artist, the chances of that happening were pretty slim. Having finished volume three, I felt like I had to do something big. So I got in touch with a Brazilian metal band called Hibria. They had just released their debut album *Defying the Rules*, they were fresh and exciting...they were somewhat like *A Midnight Opera*. It just felt right to have such a young and powerful metal band become a part of *A Midnight Opera*. (Hopefully it won't end there. I'm planning on taking over the Metal industry \*evil laugh\*) I hung out with Marco—Hibria's AMAZING bass player—for a while and talked about teaming up. He was just as excited about the project as I was. Metal be praised! So please check out Hibria, an In-Your-Face, Kick-To-The-Balls Power Metal band from Brazil taking over where Judas Priest left off.(And I mean that in all kindness\*Hail Judas Priest!\*) [www.hibria.com](http://www.hibria.com)

And thanks to all who have read my books and appreciated the story.  
I hope you enjoyed volume three and here's to many more volumes to come.  
Stay Metal!!!

—Hans “Hanzo” Steinbach

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Hibria tracks, visit  
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# SILENT BUT DEADLY

24

Private Investigator

Pie, Darnen  
Boy!

Brain Smash!  
Brain Smash!

DING

Something  
must've crawled  
up his ass and  
died!

What an  
unhappy  
stomach!

I'm  
gonna  
be  
sick...







Gerrit Verwardt  
wounded, 1924

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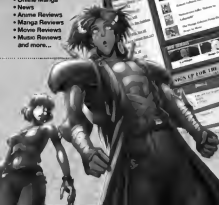
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